

THE  
DISSENTERS  
GUIDE,

RESOLVING THEIR

**Doubts and Scruples,**

ABOUT

KNEELING

At Receiving the

**Sacrament.**

Published to prevent Men and their Families  
from being Ruined by

**EXCOMMUNICATION.**

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THE  
DISSENTERS

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RESOLVING THEIR

Doubts and Scruples

ABOUT

KNEELING

According to the

Sacrament

Published to preserve Men and their Faith  
from being misled by

EXCOMMUNICATION

W. D. DOW  
MIDOLXXII

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(I)

THE  
DISSENTERS  
GUIDE,  
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Doubts and Scruples,  
ABOUT  
KNEELING  
At Receiving the  
Sacrament.

A Rightly inform'd Conscience is the indispensable Duty of all men to seek as a concernment of the greatest worth; that thereby the irregularities of a Scrupulous Conscience, may not expose men and their Families to that Ruine and Poverty which may attend the Guidance there-

of. And though if a man cannot desert all temporal felicity for the sake of Christ, he can neither ever make a sound Christian, or a good Martyr: Yet men must take heed that those Sufferings which attend a Christian life, come upon them from a good warrant; even such an one as is founded on the Divine Truths of the Scriptures, and therefore, what contradicts those truths, is a sufficient ground for any mans sufferings. Now whereas Kneeling at the Sacrament hath lately been the occasion of sundry mens Sufferings, the tendency of the ensuing Discourse, is to remove those Objections that some men may have against that manner of Communion, in endeavouring to remove those Objections and Scruples, which may cause men to lye liable to Excommunication for Non-Conformity to that Gesture: And the first is,

*Kneeling suits not with the person of a Co-heir, therefore it is unlawful. And why doth it not? Answer is made, That Kneeling is a carriage whereby we acknowledge our selves to be in a condition of inferiority and dis-fellowship with Christ; whereas Sitting is such a position of body, as argueth not subjection and humility, but rather equality and familiarity, therefore Kneeling suits not with the person of a Co-heir. I should rather have reasoned quite contrary, thus; We are in a conditon of inferiority and dis-fellowship with*



with Christ, we owe subjection and humility to Christ; therefore we should Kneel rather than Sit at receiving of the Sacrament.

It is true: We are Co-heirs with Christ, yet this imports not any equallity, Christ is the Son of God by nature, we by Adoption and Grace: Christ is Heir *ex propria dignitate*, we *ex permissione*. Heaven is his by an Eternal Right, our Inheritance is his purchase; he is the *Heir of all things*; happy are we if we can obtain the meanest Mansions in the Kingdom of Heaven. Which way soever we consider Christ, either in his Person, Actions, or Offices, we shall find him far our Superiour, and consequently our selves in a condition of Inferiority with him: Yea, do we not acknowledge him to be the Head of his whole Church? And that not only as it receives from him sense and motion in the course of Christianity, but as it owes him subjection also, in regard of his Sovereignty. And if *the natural head be the most noble of all the parts, how excellent then is he who is the head of the whole Church?*

It is true that Christ hath advanced our Nature by his Incarnation and Passion: But that must rather humble us, than puff us up, that we should account our selves his fellows.  
And

And lest the white feathers of our Adoption might Swan-like make us swell, yet the black feet of our manifold Corruptions may justly deject us. The greater favours and honours Christ affords us, the more it becomes us to be humble.

Thus the Blessed Virgin, when the Angel delivered that Honourable Embassie from the GOD of Heaven, was not lifted up in Pride, but answered in an humble fashion, *Behold the Handmaid of the Lord.* And John the Baptist, who had the honour to be the instrument of our Saviours Inauguration at his Baptism, how humbly doth he acknowledge, *His shoe latchet I am not worthy to unloose!* So, if Christ shall vouchsafe to esteem us his Servants, ( as the Prodigal Son intreated his Father ) we are Blessed and happy, tho' we do not account our selves his Fellows. *It was no robbery in Christ to be equal with God,* but it is no less than Luciferian Pride in us, to make our selves equal to Christ.

Object. But when we come to the Sacrament, we are to all the persons of Co-heirs, so that this so this humble deportment cannot then become us.

Resp. Yes surely, very well. Our Christian duties must not be like Pharaohs Kine  
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that eat up one another, but like the Cherubins that looked one upon another, and both to the Mercy Seat. Many Virtues, tho' different in themselves, are so connexed, that they consort very well in the same action, as St. *Austin* hath observed in the Centurion, and the Publican, one receiving Christ with much joy, the other with great humility; *Ambo salvatorem honorificantes diverso, & quasi contrario modo*; each of them honouring our Saviour in a diverse, and as were it a contrary manner. And do we not act the persons of Co-heirs when we pray? for we speak familiarly to God, as to a Father: yea, it is the Spirit of Adoption that makes us cry *Abba*, Father, at those times when upon our Knees we become humble petitioners to our gracious God for his Favours. Thus joy, humility and confidence may all concur in the very same act: Yea, what Duty is exempted from humility, which must ballance all our actions? When we hear the Word of God, we must bring trembling Souls; when we Pray, it becomes us well to prostrate our selves before the Throne of Grace. And will not the like humble demeanour become us when we come to the Table of the Lord? Yes, and to confess there upon our Knees, *That we are not worthy to gather up the Crumbs that are under his Table.*

Again

Again, it is disputed that *Kneeling crossed the assurance of our Co-heirship with Christ, and therefore it is unlawful.*

*Resp.* That this Proposition is untrue, I appeal to the experience of thousands, who do humbly Kneel at the Receiving of the Sacrament. For my self, I have Receiv'd it diversly, and I thank God comfortably. Yet have I Received it with as much fruit and comfort when I Kneeled, as when I used other gestures. And I am confident those who use to Receive it Sitting, do gain no more assurance of their Co-heirship, than those who Receive it Kneeling.

But let us examine the Reasons of this position; the first whereof is this: *It directeth our hearts to an apprehension of dis fellowship with Christ in our future state of Glory represented at the Lords Table, by reason that it convinceth the performers thereof to be of an inferior, and unfellow-like condition with Christ: Ergo, it crosseth our assurance, and therefore it is unlawful.*

To this I Answer, That there is great difference between our Co-heirship, and equality of Fellowship with Christ. For tho' we be now Co-heirs with Christ *through Hope*; yet do

do we challenge no Fellowship of Equality with him, but acknowledge our due Subjection to him, as our Lord.

And when we shall hereafter be in actual and real possession of our Inheritance, I hope Christ shall challenge that Priviledge, *In the Kings Throne I will be above thee, yea far above all Principality, and Might, and Domination, &c.* So that if Kneeling be a Bar to our Equality and Fellowship (as well it may) yet is it not any hindrance to the apprehension of our Co-heirship with Christ, which is assured to us of our Blessed Saviour by Participation of the blessed Sacrament, without Consideration, Intention, or Institution of any Gesture. For it is a groundless Conceit, to hold that Christ intended the Gesture of Sitting as a means to give assurance of our Co-heirship; and it croseth their opinions who will have no Gesture, or other Ceremony in the Service of God to be Significant.

Another Reason why Kneeling hinders the Assurance of our Co-heirship, is this, *Because it Diverteth our hearts from Meditating on the Death of Christ; for we cannot at the same time Meditate and tender to God a worthy Sacrifice of Prayer.*

I Answer, that these are not such opposite employments ( as they are called ) that they cannot stand together. For, if Intention and Prayer may concur, yea ought not to be separated, why may not Meditation also, which hath great Affinity with the same? Yea such correspondence there is ( rather than opposition ) between Meditation and Prayer, that they are both comprehended in one Hebrew Word. And surely it seems strange to me it should be held impossible, that at the same, instant a man should Meditate upon the benefits of Christs Passion, and Pray that he may have an interest therein and benefit thereby.

A third Argument to prove Kneeling unlawful in the act of Receiving is, *That it doth debar us from Partaking with Christ of the Priviledges and Prerogatives of this Table, because it debarreth us from social Admittance and Entertainment, in regard we are not at that time and act, of an Equal and Fellow-like condition with Christ at his Table.*

First, I Answer, That civil Tables yield not these supposed Priviledges, and Prerogatives of an Equal and Fellow-like condition to every Guest. If a poor man were invited to a Noblemans Table, would not an humble carriage

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carriage become him? And could he, without grofs Presumption, entertain a thought of Equality, and Fellow-like condition with the Invitant? Yet must we, poor wretches, by this manner of Reasoning, hold our selves wronged and debased, except upon our entertainment at Christs Table, we assume Presumptuous thoughts of an Equal and Fellow-like condition with him the King of Kings.

Secondly, It is considerable, that this holy Table and Banquet do differ from others which are meerly civil, neither do they yeild us those Priviledges that the civil do.

At civil Banquets, being at Table with men of worth, it is civility to put on our hats, but not seemly to do so at this Holy Banquet.

Again, when we are at a civil Table, it is a common liberty and priviledge for a Guest to take meat, and carve to himself ( an action of more moment than a Gesture ) but it is not so at this Holy Table, where every man must receive, only what is delivered to him by the hand of another; neither may he refuse to take and eat what is delivered him; which comes too short of that liberty we have at a civil Table.



And whereas this social Sitting is urged, as an essential Priviledge of the Lords Table, it may seem strange, that till of late it was never so esteemed, nor held so much as any whit material. For whereas we find plain Precedents in the ancient Writers for practice of other Gestures, I suppose it would be a troublesome task, to find amongst them any one evident Record for the Gesture of Sitting at the Sacrament.

Fourthly, Kneeling is affirmed to be, 1. Repugnant to the Law of Nature. 2. Because it is repugnant to Decency: 3. Being no Gesture for a Table of repast; and therefore is unlawful.

For Answer whereunto, I might first distinguish between a Civil and a Sacred Table, and shew that they require not correspondence of all Comportments, as before I shewed. But it is observable, that Nature hath not prescribed any such particular Table-Gesture, as Sitting, Standing, or Kneeling at our Meat. We know that the *Muscovites* neither have any Table, nor do Sit at their meats as we do. And we read that the Jews leaned, so that their Gesture was nearer Lying, than Sitting. Now these Gestures, in our conceits, seem very Indecent (as *M. Calvin* hath observed concerning

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concerning the Gesture of the Jews ) because they are dissonant from ours : Yet far be it from us to say they are repugnant to the Law of Nature ; for so we should tax our Saviour & his Servants for that they could not justify. Neither may we fitly say these Gestures are indecent, except we be content that they shall likewise censure ours, which no doubt seem so to them. And if it were granted, that Kneeling at a Table of common Repast, were in all mens judgments indecent, yet can it not be so concluded for our Kneeling at the Lords Table, where we are to esteem our selves rather Beggars than Benchers. If the more general Judgment and Practice of men, both Wise, Learned, and Religious, might prevail, I assure my self, the Gesture of Kneeling would be accounted Decent ; and the best reason that can be given to the contrary is, that they which write against it, do not think it so.

But for the further clearing of this Point, we must understand, that the Law of Nature is taken properly and improperly ; properly, as it is *Dictamen rationis*, that which Nature doth dictate to all Nations : Improperly, as it is a Custom of some particular Country.

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As for instance, the Apostle condemneth mens wearing of long hair, as a thing repugnant to Nature ; not because it was against the general Law or Rule of Nature: for the *French, Germans, Romans, English,* and divers other Nations, as their Writings and Monuments do Witness, have used in sundry Ages to wear long Hair ; yea, the *Spartans*, especially, because it is an Ornament of little Charge ; but because Custom, which is another Nature, had made it as it were natural for the *Corinthians* to wear it short, the Apostle doth condemn them for Violating the same. And so Custom having amongst us made that Gesture, which was of it self Indifferent, the most Solemn and Seemly Gesture at the Lords Table, those that impugn and condemn the same, come under the Apostles Censure, and dispute against themselves.

Again it is disputed, that Kneeling is a private Worship during the time and act of the Publick : *Ergo*, it is unlawful. And why is it a private Worship ? Because it presents a Worship wherein the Congregation doth not joyntly partake ; for they are not appointed to Kneel, when the Receiver doth Kneel.

I Answer, 1. This Argument condemns directly those Congregations where the Sacrament is Received Standing; for whilst some do Stand at the Table, others Sit in remote places, and are not appointed to Stand when the Receivers Stand: So that the Congregation not partaking with them in the act of Standing, they present a private Worship.

2. It Condemns divers Congregations where the Sacrament is Received either Sitting or Standing. For in those Churches wherein I have seen most preciseness in the time of Celebration of the Sacrament, whilst some are Receiving, others are employed, either in singing of Psalms, or hearing some Scripture read. Now these actions, of singing and reading the Scriptures are more dissonant from Meditation, than Prayer is, and therefore if the one be unlawful, the other must needs be so.

Yea, this condemns all Congregations in the World, upon a ground of impossibility; for it is usual that some one, or few, are Receiving whilst others are not (which cannot possibly be otherwise, except there were as many to deliver the Sacrament, as there are to Receive it at the same instant) so that the Congregation doth not, in your account, joyntly

joyntly partake in presenting the same Worship, except you will say that bare Meditation upon the Sacrament is the same that actual Receiving is. Now if this actual Receiving by some particular Persons, being a substantial Action, do not cross the publick Worship, but may have concurrence with it, how much less can a circumstantial Gesture of a particular Person do it? Actions that have such affinity, may concur in the same Worship, without opposition of Publick and Private.

Lastly, I may truly say, that this Argument is a meer Paradox, which, to avoid Kneeling, excludes Praying; insomuch that if a Communicant, during the time of publick Administration, and after he hath Received the Sacrament, do but beseech God to Bless the same unto him, that it may be a means to Strengthen his Faith, to help him in the act of Mortification, and building of him up in Grace, by this reason he shall Sin against God; than which what can be more absurd?

To Kneel at the Sacrament, is to leave the imitable Practice of Christ and his Apostles, and in lieu thereof to observe a worse, therefore it is unlawful.

*Resp.*

*Resp.* In this Argument two things are to be considered ; First, whether we vary from the practice of Christ ? and this I confidently deny ; neither shall it be possible for any man, out of the Scriptures, to prove directly what Gesture Christ used at the Institution of the Supper.

Secondly, If it were granted, that our Saviour, and his Servants the Apostles did Celebrate and Receive it Sitting ; yet are we not necessarily tyed to imitate them therein.

It is truly said, that to *Restrain our imitation of Christ and his Apostles, to every particular circumstance of their Carriage, were against common sense.* And howsoever in Moral actions we ought to follow Christ in matter of substance, yet are we not alwaies so in respect of circumstance, especially where there is no Precept. Now that the Gesture is not of the substance of the Sacrament, it is clearly evinced, in that neither the Evangelists, nor the Apostle, doth once mention it : For who dares affirm that any substantial matter is omitted by them, who have handled the Doctrine of the Sacrament most Excellently and Exactly ? But to make this more evident by an instance ; It was our Saviour Custom to

Preach Sitting, as all the Evangelists do shew, and Saint *Austin* gives reason for it ; namely, because it doth very well agree with the Dignity of a Teacher ; yet the most precise do not imitate him therein , but use to stand when they Preach , though the People Sit. Now ( supposing that Christ Sate at the Institution of the Supper ) if the general Practice in the one doth not tye us to imitation , how can one individual act do it in the other ?

So that if we should grant, that our Saviour and his Apostles did Celebrate and Receive the Sacrament Sitting ; yet both by the Positions and Practice of them who are our Opposites we are in this matter of circumstance freed from necessity of Imitation. Yea, if Sitting had been Christs Gesture , and we bound to Imitation, how durst the ancient Churches, and divers modern Congregations make Standing their usual Gesture in Celebrating the Sacrament ; as you do write of the one, and experience shews of the other ?

The Seventh Argument ; *Kneeling in the Act of Receiving, is a Bowing down before a Consecrated Creature, out of a Religious and Reverent Respect of it, and so is against*



*gainst the Second Commandment, and consequently is unlawful.*

I Answer, That Kneeling at the Communion is no breach of the Second Commandment. It will be evident, if we consider the branches of the Commandment, which are two. The first, that we make not any graven Image to our selves, that is, of our own heads: Now the Sacrament, and Elements in the Sacrament, are no humane invention, but Gods Sacred Ordinance, which Christ himself hath commanded, and left to perpetuate the Remembrance of his Death till his Coming to Judgment; and therefore we offend not against the first Branch.

The Second Branch of the Commandment forbids the Bowing down to an Image, which imports the giving of Religious Worship to any Creature; and this we utterly disclaim; for although we Kneel at the Sacrament, yet we do not Kneel to the Sacrament, but to God the Author of the Sacrament. And this may appear to any, who loves not to be contentious; for that in the act of Receiving only, and not of beholding the Sacrament, we do Kneel. It is confessed, by way of approbation, that

the *Ancient Fathers* carried a reverent Regard to the Bread and Wine of the Lords Supper, and had a Reverent Conceit of them. And so do we likewise Revere the Sacrament, as an Excellent Ordinance of Almighty God, yet is not that the cause we Kneel, but the Majesty of our God, to whom at that instant we Pray; and the Mercy of our God, who vouchsafeth us this great Blessing, causeth us to humble our selves. And if we Receive upon our Knees temporal Favours at the hands of mortal Princes, how much more will it become us to Receive this inestimable spiritual Favour from the hands of of the Immortal God, with all submission and Reverence?

If the Worship at our Receiving, did determine in the Sacrament, or were transient by it to God; As the *Romanists* diversly hold concerning the Worship of their Images, then would we not Justifie our Action. But forasmuch as it is tendred immediately to God, there is no Just cause of Condemning our Practice. For we give to the Sacrament that which belongs to the Sacrament, namely, a reverent estimation; and to God, that which belongs to God, That is, Humble Adoration.

This

This Argument used in the Dispute, is like *Bellarmin*, to prove the Adoring of Creatures; for whereas it is said in the Ninety ninth Psalm, the fifth verse, *Fall down before his footstool*, the Cardinal would infer, that the Ark was adored. And thus our disputants, because we Kneel before the Sacrament, do conclude that we Kneel to the Sacrament.

But indeed, as the four and twenty Elders falling down to him that sat on the Throne, though they fell down before the Throne, did not Worship the Throne, but him that *Lives for ever*: So we, when we Kneel before the Sacrament, at the Receiving of it, do not Kneel to the Sacrament, but to Christ the Author of the Sacrament, *Who is God blessed for ever*.

The eighth Argument is this: *It was brought in by that Antichrist of Rome, for the Worship of his Brethren-god, therefore it cannot Lawfully be entertained by the true Professors of the Gospel.*

For Answer to which, I deny both parts of the Argument. Concerning the Antecedent, it hath two Branches, and neither found: The one, That Kneeling was brought  
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in by that Antichrist of *Rome* ; the other, that it was brought in for the Worship of his Bread-en-god.

Now to the First, I demand what Antichrist that was who brought in Kneeling at the Sacrament? Some there are, who peremptorily affirm that it was *Honorius* the Third. But that is not true ; For although *Honorius* made a Decree for the Adoring of the Sacrament, at the time of Elevation ; yet we find not one syllable to prove that he decreed any Gesture for the time and act of participation. Yea, it is confidently affirmed by him who wrote the Dispute, that Kneeling in the Act of Receiving, was not brought in by *Honorius*.

Now

Now if you demand, by whom was it then brought in? Silence or Ignorance must be the Answer. But methinks, such a confident assertion, that both crosseth the practice, and troubleth the peace of the Church, should have some direct and positive Proof, and not depend upon probability. Instead wherof there is this reason given: We find neither Decree nor practice of Kneeling, till after the time of *Honorius*: therefore it is not like, that either he, or any before him brought it in. But if that reason be good, then I may conclude, that it was neither decreed by *Honorius*, nor any other Bishop of *Rome* following, because we find no Decree thereof upon Record.

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It is further Affirmed, that sitting was the Gesture in the act of Receiving in the time of the Institution, and divers years after ; and then standing, from about the year one hundred and fifty, to the year one thousand two hundred and twenty and upward.

I Answer, That concerning the Gesture used by Christ in the Institution, I have already spoken ; and now I will very briefly examine the Testimonies inferred for proof of the Ages succeeding.

Where first, *Justin Martyr* saith, *After the Pastors Exhortation upon the Sundays, we all rise up and pray, and afterward the Sacrament is delivered to every one.*

Now saith the Dispute, if the people had Kneeled in the time of Receiving

Receiving, he would as well have shewed that, as the other practices in praying and hearing the Word God. For Answer whereunto might not I say, If the people had stood or sate in the time of Receiving, would he not as well have shewed that, as the other practices in praying and hearing the Word? But further, I say, had that Father esteemed the Gesture at the Sacrament a thing so material, as you account it, doubtless he would have shewed their practice; but because he did not so esteem it, he did not at all mention it. For whereas it is said, *We will rise up and pray*: That rising up from their seats, might be as well to Kneel as to Stand.

*Clemens Alexandrinus saith, that when some have divided the Sacrament, they suffer every one of the people to take*

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*his part.* Now how could they take their parts without being reached to them, except they stood or sate at the Table?

To this I might Answer, that *umere partem, to take his part,* doth not necessarily import an immediate taking without delivering. And further, if it be granted, that in the Church of *Alexandria* they stood at the Table and took the Sacrament themselves, yet it is evident by that place in *Justin Martyr* before mentioned, and likewise by *Tertullian*, and others, that in other Churches the Sacrament was delivered to the people by the hands of their Pastors, which might be done without Sitting or standing at the Table.

For the Age 300. *Eusebius* is alleged, to prove Sitting at the Communion,

munion, from a comparifon of the Christians with the Philofophers, mentioned in *Philo Judeus*. The indirectnefs of which collection I might eafily fhew, were it material. But what need I do it, when it has been done fo often to my hands already?

For the year 400. *Chryfoftom* is cited, who faith, *Frustra ſtamus ad altare, In vain we ſtand at the Altar*. But what is that to the peoples Geſture in Receiving? For *Chryfoftom* ſpeaks only of the Miniſters Geſture in the time of Divine Service and Sacrament, at which the people were not preſent; and therefore there is no mention of their Geſture.

It has been ſaid by ſome that, If *Gregory* and many more *Fathers* and *Doctors*, ſhould in their writings men-

that Gorgonia, and sundry others, prostrated themselves on their Knees in the act of partaking at the Lords Table, the same is no disadvantage to the present question. The reason intended is, because such ( though many ) particulars do not shew the practice of the Church. And may not I use the same words concerning *Dionysius in Eusebius*, and *Clemens Alexandrinus in his Stromats*? Can that which they Write of some particular Church, shew the practice of the Universal?

Lastly, the Custom and Constitutions of the Church are urged, which from the Second Age of the Church, to the Year 1220. forbade Kneeling at Prayer, on every Lords Day; for if Kneeling at Prayers was removed, it cannot be imagined that Kneeling at the Sacrament should be allowed. Now  
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to prove that Kneeling at prayers was removed generally on the Lords Day, divers Fathers and Councils are inferred, yet some of them inconsideratly, and impertinently (that I say not cunningly) as namely Cyprian, *Stamus ad orationem, We stand at prayer* ; as though this had been the only gesture, whereas he saith, *quando stamus ad orationem, when we stand at prayer*, without reference to time or place. And the like may be said of *Anselme*, cited after the same manner.

Again, inconsideratly, as that of *Basil, de spiritu sancto, cap. 27.* For not only *Erasmus* sufficiently, but *Mr. Cooke* abundantly hath shewed, that this Book of *Basils*, or at least the later part of it, (whereof this 27th. Chapter is a part) is a meer counterfeit.

Concerning

Concerning the testimonies of *Tertullian*, and the Council of *Nice*, they indeed seem to testify this practice of Praying standing on the Lords Day. but yet that this was not an universal practice, it may appear by *St. Austin's* Addubitation, who *Epist. 119.* saith, *Ut autem stantes in illis diebus & omnibus Dominicis oremus, utrum obique servetur ignoro: That we Pray standing on those and every Lords Day, whether it be every where observed do I not know.* And more evidently by *Chrysostom's* Relation of the Churches Practice in those Parts; which accords directly with ours at this day. *Before the Celebration of the Sacrament,* (saith he) *Prayers are made in general for all People, and after that, those who do not communicate, are dismissed, another Prayer is begun, wherein we all (not stand, but) cast our selves down*

*down in Prayer together, and rise up together.* By these Testimonies it is evident that Kneeling at Prayer was not generally removed every Lords Day, and consequently the foundation of this Argument doth fail. Again, the Inference, if the Antecedent were granted, is not good; They did not Kneel upon the Lords Day at Prayer; *Ergo*, not at the Sacrament.

Thus we see, that what hath been urged and alledged, doth not prove the first Branch of the Antecedent; namely, That *Kneeling in the Act of Receiving, was brought in by that Antichrist of Rome*; and therefore much less can the second be proved, viz. That *it was brought in for Worship of a Breaden God*. For, as we find no footing concerning the Author, so much less concerning that End.

Now

Now as the Antecedent is uncertain, So is the Argument unsound : *Some Antichristian Bishop brought in Kneeling in the Act of Receiving : or thus ; It hath been abused to Idolatry by some Antichristian Bishop ; therefore it is unlawful.* A man might as well reason thus ; *It was proper and peculiar to the Sacrifices of Hercules, that the Heathen did celebrate them Sitting ; therefore it is not lawful for Christians to celebrate this Eucharistical Sacrifice of the Lords Supper so.* The unclean Spirit said to our Saviour, *Thou art the Holy One of God ;* and the Spirit of Divination, by the Damofel concerning Paul and Silas, *These men are the Servants of God ;* (yea, and this they spake to evil ends) therefore we may not say so. Yea, if this Argument be good, we must remove Fire from our Houses, the



the Sun out of the Heavens, Bells out of Steeples, Fonts out of Churches, Churches out of the world, because the *Chaldeans* abused the one, the *Persians* the other, and the *Papists* the rest. The places of Scripture cited for proof of the Argument, are very impertinent: Some which have a particular reference, are made too general, as that in *Leviticus*. For whereas it is said, *After the doings of the Land of Egypt, and the Land of Canaan, you shall not do; that hath relation to those sins of Uncleanness which are mentioned in the same Chapter. And the same being general, can no more abide the Light than this; After the manner of the Pagans and Papists shall you not do; but the Pagans and Papists do kneel in Prayer; therefore you shall not kneel in Prayer. Or rather thus: The Papists and Pagans do kneel to their Idols, there-*

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*fore Professors if the Gospel may not kneel to God: For so indeed it is inferred; because the Papists in the Act of Receiving, do kneel to the Bread, therefore we in the same Act may not kneel to God.*

The other Places require the defacing of Images and Idols, but what is that to Kneeling? For there is great difference between that which is in it self lawful, and that which is unlawful, as their Idols were, which represented False Gods; between a permanent Substance and a transient Action; between that which may have good use, and that which cannot.

If *Antichrist* hath stained this Gesture by his Idolatry, shall *Christians* therefore, having purged it, be debarred of their lawful Interest therein? Or rather,  
as

as the *Israelite*, having taken in war a Woman amongst the Enemies, when he had shaved her head and pared her nails, might take her home as his own; may not the Church of God take this Gesture, being pared and purged from *Romish* corruption, and apply it to the Service of God?

Mr. Cartwright tells us, That, *If amongst the Romish filth we find any good thing, that we willingly receive, not as theirs, but as the Jews did the holy Ark from the Philistines.* For (saith he) herein it is true that is said, *The Sheep must not lay down her Fell, because she sees the Wolf sometimes clothed with it.* St. Austin shews that we may lawfully use the water of Fountains, and woods of the Forests, which by *Pagans* have been dedicated to their Idols. *Epist.* 194. And may we not use that Ge-  
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sture that hath been abused to Idolatry?

But it is Objected, That *this Gesture can never be purged*; And to this purpose are urged the Positions of fundry learned men, who would that all things which have appearance of *Popery* be banished; and the same is confirmed by the practice of divers Godly men in the like case.

To which I answer; First, That this Position is strange, which will admit no possibility of purging any Ceremonies corrupted in the Church of *Rome*.

Mr. Robinson, a Dissenter, saith, *We do acknowledge it (meaning in the Church of England) many excellent Truths of Doctrine, which we also teach, and many Christian Ordinances, which we also practise, being purged from the pollution of Antichrist.*

Let us further consider the Opinions

pinions of fundry eminent and learned men in this Case.

Beza saith of this very Gesture, *Epiſt. 12. Genuculatio ſpeciem habet piæ venerationis, &c.* This Bowing of the Knee hath a kind of godly Reverence, and therefore it might heretofore be uſed to good purpoſe,

Biſhop Jewel ſaith, I grant that Sitting, Standing, and other like Ceremonies in the holy Miniſtration, are left to the diſcretion of the Church.

Yea, Mr. Cartwright acknowledgeth again and again, That Sitting is not neceſſary; and though he ſay, that Kneeling is dangerous,, yet he ſaith not that it is unlawful.

Peter Martyr ſaith in general, I cannot be perſwaded,, that the wickedneſs of the Pope is ſuch, that whatſoever he toucheth muſt thereupon be polluted, that afterwards it may not be of uſe to the Godly.

And concerning this Matter in  
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particular, he saith elsewhere, *It is no matter of Difference, whether we receive the Sacrament, sitting, standing, or kneeling, so that Christs institution be preferred, and occasion of Superstition removed.*

And surely those are bad Chirurgeons that have no other means of Cure but only by the Saw and the Cautery.

Again the Fact of *Hezekiah* may be objected, who did not seek to purge, but brake in pieces the Brazen Serpent; and the practice of our Saviour Christ, who held it not sufficient by Doctrine to speak against the Jewish Washings, and so to use them to another end, but refused that Custom wholly.

Hereunto I answer, first, particular Facts, even of worthy men, do not tie us necessarily to imitation. *Moses* proceeded far against the

the *Israelites* Idolatry, when *he* took the *Golden Calf*, burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, strewed it upon the water, and made them drink of it. What, have others sinned that have not done the like?

Again, there is great difference between the Brazen Serpent and Kneeling at the Communion, both in their Nature and Use. In their Nature, the one being a transient action, the other a permanent substance, and consequently more apt to be abused to Idolatry. In their Use; for the vertue of Cure being vanished, the Brazen Serpent ceased to be of use; but the Act of Kneeling will ever remain necessary, to manifest our humble thankfulness for so great Benefits as we receive by the blessed Sacrament.

3. There was great cause why *Hezekiah* should thus proceed against



gainst the Brazen Serpent, in regard that to those days the Children of Israel burnt incense unto it: But so is not the Gesture of Kneeling abused by us; and therefore needs not such an absolute abolishing.

And for our Saviours Practice, it is rather with us than against us; for though he did shun the Superstitious Washings of the Pharisees; yet who can think that he did utterly forbear all civil and wholsom washing before meat? So we do shun and detest the Idolatrous Kneeling of the Papists at the Sacrament; but to abandon Kneeling totally, we have no cause nor warrant.

**F I N I S.**

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